

EXHIBIT L

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY
TRENTON VICENAGE

GEORGE STAMOS, :
: :
Plaintiff, :
: :
-v- :
: :
AOP OPERATING COMPANY, LLP; :
JOSEPH SOLANO AND JONATHAN :
SOBEL, :
: :
Defendants. :

VIDEOCONFERENCE

DEPOSITION OF: MATTHEW KASSIN

September 14, 2021

TAYLOR & FRIEDBERG, LLC
Certified Court Reporters
60 Washington Street
Morristown, New Jersey 07960
Tel. 973-285-0411
E-mail: csr@taylorfriedberg.com

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

T R A N S C R I P T of the deposition of
MATTHEW KASSIN, a witness herein, called for Oral
Examination by the parties in the above-entitled action,
said deposition being taken pursuant to Notice, by and
before LORI YUCHT, a Certified Court Reporter and Notary
Public of the State of New Jersey, License No. XI00200400,
at the Offices of Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi, 830 Morris
Turnpike, Short Hills, New Jersey, on Tuesday, September 14,
2021, commencing at 10:23 in the forenoon.

1 Q One of the things that you have been
2 identified as knowing something about is Mr. Stamos
3 having a, quote unquote, poor managerial style. Do
4 you believe that you have knowledge that you can
5 talk about that?

6 A Yes I do.

7 Q Okay. What -- can you tell me --
8 well, do you believe that Mr. Stamos had a poor
9 managerial style?

10 A I do.

11 Q Can you tell me why?

12 A Well, personal experience as a new --
13 a new salesman learning about both the new cars and
14 the used cars, I have gone to him a couple of times
15 for help when somebody came in looking for a used
16 car. And what he offered me was not only no
17 guidance but was actually belligerent and gruff with
18 me and -- and dismissive and wouldn't help me. And
19 when other people saw my frustration they said to
20 me, don't go to George, George is never going to be
21 helpful, come to me and I will help you out -- other
22 salesman had said that to me.

23 Q Who --

24 A So I had that feeling that that was
25 kind of, like, a known thing. They said don't go to

1 A No. Those are the three guys that
2 come to mind.

3 Q What was -- what was the
4 circumstances in which Zach first said to you, don't
5 go to George, or words to that effect?

6 A I had a guy that came in on a used
7 car, and he was clearly interested in the car, and I
8 forget -- somewhere in Pennsylvania, either
9 Langhorne or something. But he drove a fair
10 distance to come see this very specific car. And
11 what I later found out from other used car sales
12 managers is, well, that is a key piece of
13 information. The guy is not just a local guy
14 driving around and say, oh, that is a nice car. He
15 drove in -- and I am not a hundred percent sure of
16 this, but I believe he was with his daughter. So
17 there are certain kind of, like, profiles that you
18 look at when somebody comes in, especially for a
19 used car. The guy is traveling, spending Saturday
20 with his daughter, drives an hour and a half to come
21 see a very specific car, he is pretty much -- I
22 don't want to say he is sold on the car, but there
23 is a real strong connection with the car. The fact
24 that he came all the way to see you and that he
25 feels that, it's a good deal.

1 So I had a guy come there and he
2 said, I like the car, she likes these kind of cars,
3 she is comfortable driving it. So when you're
4 selling something you have got to check a lot of
5 buckets, and those -- a lot of buckets were there.
6 And the problem was is that he wanted it at a less
7 price, which is what everybody does, they always
8 want it the less price.

1 of the dealership? You know, what can I say to a
2 man that is intelligent, outside this is the price,
3 go take a hike if you don't like it.

4 And that was very frustrating to me
5 because I knew that I had somebody that really liked
6 the car that was on the lot. It was my job to
7 find -- you know, to find out what is between and
8 meet that objection. And he gave me not only zero
9 guidance that I could use, nothing -- no
10 professional response, no positioning, but he
11 actually made me feel -- he dismissed me and made me
12 feel bad. And I guess the guy that was helping me
13 learn this new car business that saw that my
14 shoulders are slumping and they said, look, don't go
15 to -- let me help you. And they told me, here is
16 what you should say to him. Mr. So-and-So, I know
17 you just drove a long while, obviously you passed
18 many other used car dealers from Langhorne,
19 Pennsylvania, to here. There's got to be a reason
20 why you like this car, it is a great deal. I think
21 at that time we could go into CARFAX and get some
22 very basic information on the car, you know, where
23 it was bought, how many owners it had, whether it
24 had been in an accident or not. And it wasn't
25 anywhere as sophisticated as vAuto, but it gave us

1 just talking points. And they show you that. They
2 said, here, it only had one owner, it never had an
3 accident, your daughter likes it, she feels
4 comfortable driving it, that is a really important
5 thing with a young driver, blah, blah, blah. You
6 know, they gave you stuff that I could go and talk
7 to this guy about to over -- hopefully overcome his
8 objection as opposed to George's response which is,
9 I don't know, tell him whatever you want. That is
10 the price, tell him to go F himself if he doesn't
11 want to pay the price.

12 Q Okay. I want -- I want to interrupt
13 you for just a quick second. I promise you can
14 continue. Did he -- I wasn't sure if you said he
15 actually said, tell him to go F himself or it was
16 like he told him to go F himself. What -- did he
17 actually say go F himself?

18 A Yeah. I wouldn't swear to it. I
19 wouldn't swear to it in this particular instance
20 because he might have very easily said that, he is a
21 very gruff man. You know, we were all males and
22 there were no choir boys in that sales group, so
23 it's not like we were -- there was any shortage of
24 salty language. But it was a real disregard to the
25 fact that we had a potential customer there and it

1 three objections that the guy gave you, then you
2 have done your job.

3 Q Okay. So, just so -- just so I am
4 clear, you asked -- well, was your objection to the
5 way Mr. Stamos reacted, his manner of answering, or
6 something else?

7 A The primary was that he offered no
8 help, no guidance, no help, no -- here is how you
9 handle this kind of thing. That -- I have been in
10 sales for a long time, I have worked for a lot of
11 sales managers, I have been in sale managers
12 positions where I understood that outside of the
13 numbers and the revenue that I am responsible for,
14 that, you know, there are people that are going to
15 require my insight and help. For him to react like
16 that was jaw dropping to me. So was he gruff?

17 Yeah. Was he unprofessional and -- yeah,
18 absolutely. But -- and did I like being talked to
19 like that? No. Did it actually have an impact on
20 my ability and -- my sales ability when somebody
21 kind of browbeats you there? Yeah, absolutely. I
22 learned that. But my -- my primary reaction was to
23 his inability to do what I have always thought was
24 the primary function of his job, was to help
25 salesmen sell cars, whether it's providing tools and

1 A I'm sorry?

2 Q Part of what I read to you earlier
3 that you have been represented to have knowledge of,
4 was Mr. Stamos's inappropriate comments to sales
5 associates. What can you tell me about that?

6 A I could tell you that he was known to
7 use -- oh, to sales associates. Yeah. He was known
8 to use ethnic slurs when -- when somebody who had a
9 certain ethnicity walked on the lot.

10 Q We'll come back to ethnic slurs in
11 one second. What about -- what about just with
12 respect to sales associates, inappropriate comments
13 to sales associates, other than ethnic slurs?

14 A No.

15 Q Let's talk about ethnic slurs since
16 that was my next question anyway. What do you know
17 about that?

18 A I know that he had a name for Indian
19 or Pakistani ethnic customers, and he would use
20 it -- certainly I have heard him say that -- not in
21 front of the customer themselves, but he would use
22 that outside of earshot with the customers.

23 Q And what was the term he used?

24 A Patel.

25 Q I am assuming you are aware that

1 Patel is an actual Indian name. Correct?

2 A I am.

3 Q In fact, a very common surname.

4 Would you agree with me on that?

5 A Yes. Absolutely. So is Greenberg
6 for Jews.

7 Q Understood. Kassin, not so much.

8 A No.

9 Q What basis of -- what information do
10 you have that the person he was referring to's name
11 was not actually Patel?

12 A Because it was a Patel. If you have
13 some Patels out there, it wouldn't have been
14 characterized that way.

15 Q Why do you say that?

16 A I think if he actually had knowledge
17 of who that person was, I believe it was people that
18 just came on the lot, parked their car, got out of
19 the car, he might have known them from a prior. He
20 might have said, I know them, they are Patel. His
21 demeanor again was one of -- I don't want to say
22 disgust, but when somebody uses a name -- and they
23 could have been a Patel, it would be in a derogatory
24 fashion. There is a certain kind of -- it's not
25 disgust, there is a putdown in the way that you say

1 that. And he had done it enough where you start
2 to -- I don't know if there are that many people --
3 he had done it enough where it was George again.

4 Q Did you ever make any report or
5 complaint to anyone, other than other salesperson,
6 about Mr. Stamos using the name Patel in a way that
7 you believed to be as a slur?

8 A No.

9 Q Any other -- any other ethnic slurs
10 that you believe that Mr. Stamos used other than --

11 A No.

12 MR. DERATZIAN: I don't have any
13 other questions. Thank you. Your counsel for AOP
14 might.

15 MS. TRACY: I have some questions.

16

17 CROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MS. TRACY:

18 Q Mr. Kassin, what is your date of
19 birth?

20 A March 5th, 1957.

21 Q How old are you now?

22 A Sixty-four. I am going to be
23 sixty-five in March.

24 Q How old were you when you were hired
25 by Audi of Princeton?

1 A So I was 62, 63; 62.

2 Q Who hired you?

3 A Joe Solano.

4 Q If I call Audi of Princeton AOP going
5 forward, do you understand what I mean by that?

6 A Yes.

7 Q You were never actually fired by AOP.

8 Correct?

9 A Correct. I think -- yeah. I think I
10 was furloughed.

11 Q You were furloughed. Correct?

12 A Yeah. Correct.

13 Q At some point after you were
14 furloughed, Joe Solano called you and encouraged you
15 to return to work. Correct?

16 A Yes.

17 Q After you were furloughed, Johan
18 Emanuel also called you and encouraged you to return
19 to work. Correct?

20 A Yes.

21 Q After you were furloughed, Richard
22 Ortiz also called you and encouraged you to return
23 to work. Correct?

24 A Yes.

25 Q During the course of your employment

1 at AOP, who was your supervisor?

2 A Rich Ortiz.

3 Q What was it like to work with George
4 Stamos?

5 A It was uncomfortable, it was
6 unproductive.

7 Q When you had questions, or when you
8 needed help with something in your role as a
9 salesperson, did you feel like you could go to
10 George Stamos for help or with questions?

11 A No.

12 Q In your experience, did other
13 employees of AOP avoid going to George Stamos with
14 questions or for help?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did you find that you had to go
17 around George Stamos to get a deal done?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Did you ever see George Stamos lose
20 his temper with customers?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Did you ever see Mr. Stamos lose his
23 temper with other employees of AOP?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Did you ever see Mr. Stamos yell at

1 an objection. You know, just go out and sell.
2 Well, what does that mean? Sell. This guy has got
3 an objection about, he thinks one of the tires is
4 bald. How do I sell that? I am not doing your job
5 for you. That was the kind of interaction you'd
6 have. So is that kind of -- I think that's
7 demeaning, insulting. He didn't call me a name. He
8 didn't say I was stupid or a jerk or anything like
9 that, but I think that interaction definitely left
10 me with those similar kinds of perceptions.

11 Q Okay. I will represent to you that
12 George Stamos was terminated from AOP in July of
13 2019. How did your experience at AOP change after
14 George was terminated?

15 A So, when George was there, I had no
16 interest in selling used cars. I would try to stay
17 away from the used car lot and anybody that came in
18 to buy a used car. When Diego came on board and all
19 of a sudden gave us a little bit of training on how
20 to handle the basic objections and then -- I
21 believe, you know, we got some training -- I don't
22 if it was from Diego or some other guy from Honda
23 that came in, Mike Clites, that gave us vAuto. But
24 Diego showed me how to use the CARFAX info which,
25 again, was not as robust as what we got from vAuto

1 but at least could give me something professional I
2 could talk about without making the guy feel like a
3 jerk, without making me feel like, you know, we have
4 nothing else to offer, just the price. And then
5 when so -- and I started to sell some cars. I would
6 say that at that point, used cars became, I don't
7 know, like 25 percent, 30 percent of my sales, which
8 was like, oh, wow, this is now not something to run
9 from, this is something to do.

10 And then when this guy Johan came on
11 board and he really started to -- A, he started to
12 merchandise. I mean, the cars were just -- before
13 that, George branded cars so that all the
14 Volkswagens that were off lease that he got from VW
15 credit would usually be in a lot, maybe a couple
16 year old VWs, and he would just segregate cars that
17 way. So when Johan came he actually -- I mean, he
18 would put all the white SUVs up in front. And I
19 remember driving in one day saying, oh my gosh, this
20 looks great, I want to stop and see this. It
21 increased the look -- what they call curb appeal, of
22 all the cars. I just wanted to stop. And then
23 beyond that, the cars were in better shape. They
24 gave us -- by that time we had vAuto where you could
25 really make a smart pitch, and I got much better. I

1 really felt confident. In selling used cars, I
2 probably was responsible for 30, 35 percent of my
3 business. I loved it because it wasn't a commodity
4 sale that a used car was, I looked at every
5 opportunity to sell a used car and saw the impact.
6 And I kept on hearing the numbers -- I don't
7 remember any of what those numbers were but, you
8 know, at the end of the month they talked about how
9 many new cars were sold and how many used cars were
10 sold, and the numbers were dramatic for used cars.
11 So it was clear that we were on a much better path
12 and that George -- George's subpar performance, not
13 only for us as individuals, but the store in
14 general.

15 Q You previously testified that after
16 Mr. Stamos's departure from AOP, used car sales
17 comprised approximately 25 percent to 35 percent of
18 your car sales at AOP. Is that correct?

19 A Yes.

20 Q When George was still the used car
21 manager at AOP and you were working there, what
22 percentage of your sales were used cars?

23 A I would say ten to fifteen percent.

24 Q Okay. After you were furloughed by
25 AOP, why did you choose not to return to work after

1 they invited you back?

2 A I hadn't been vaccinated yet. We
3 take care of my -- my elderly in-laws, and I was
4 really concerned about being -- interacting with all
5 these people coming in, you know, in a retail
6 setting - still am. But I know -- I know things are
7 changing but I just -- it was for my own health as
8 well as that of my in-laws that are in their
9 eighties and nineties. I just didn't feel safe.

10 Q When Mr. Solano, Mr. Ortiz and Mr.
11 Emanuel invited you to return back to work after you
12 were furloughed, how old were you at that time?

13 A How old was I?

14 Q Yes. When they invited you to return
15 back to work.

16 A So I was 63, I think, when Mr. Solano
17 first said, you know, would you come back and -- 63
18 and 64. It was over the course of a number of
19 months. Because I told him I wanted to, I just
20 didn't feel safe about it.

21 MS. TRACY: Thank you. I don't have
22 any other questions right now.

23 MR. DERATZIAN: I have a couple of
24 follow-ups.

25